

COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

TOPIC Merseburg Airfield

EVALUATION [REDACTED]

PLACE OBTAINED [REDACTED]

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DATE OF CONT [REDACTED]

DATE OBTAINED [REDACTED]

DATE PREPARED 31 July 1952

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REFERENCES

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PAGES 3 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

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1. The following air activity was observed at Merseburg airfield between 20 June and 2 July 1952:

20 June. Between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., there was formation flying in elements of two and formations of about 5 planes.

21 June. Flying was practiced throughout the day. [REDACTED]

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22 June. No air activity was observed.

23 June. Between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., flights were made above the cloud base. The visibility was poor, and it was raining.

24 June. Flights were again made above the clouds. There was almost the same weather as on 23 June.

25 June. No flying activity was observed.

26 June. Between noon and 5 p.m., individual local flights were made by 3 or 4 MiG-15s or type-29s. Individual planes flew above the cloud base. At 3 p.m., 28 MiG-15s or type-29s and 1 single-engine fighter were counted. Between 10:30 p.m. and 1:15 a.m. the next morning, night flying by two MiG-15s was observed for the first time at the field. After the take-off, the planes banked to the left and then approached for landing. There was an interval of about 10 minutes between the landing and the next take-off. * Two searchlights located on the east edge of the runway were in operation during night flying. They beamed their light parallel to the runway, so that the middle section of the runway was darker than its edges. No other runway lights or obstacle lights were available. During the landings, the pilots switched the landing lights on at a distance of about 2 km from the landing field. When the planes taxied to the take-off point, the searchlights were switched off and only the position lights were on.

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27 June. Between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., there was flying activity. Individual take-offs were made. The sky was cloudless. [redacted] some of the pilots were trained enough to begin night flying, while a new group of pilots practiced flying during daytime. ** At 9 p.m., a truck with a mounted searchlight, about 1.5 meters in diameter, came from the landing field and moved to a new radio installation with one mast, located in the eastern extension of the runway. During the day, the lighting facilities on the ground were increased. A row of seven red spotlights, each about 40 cm in diameter, was erected between the radio mast and the east end of the runway. Two spotlights of the same type, located on both sides of the west end of the runway, were switched during night flying. They did not emit beams but radiated a red light. *** At 10:30 p.m., night flying started by two MiG-15s and two single-engine planes. No plane switched its landing light on. The two searchlights at the east end of the runway and the red spotlights east of the runway were in operation during night flying. The large searchlight at the radio mast flashed up and lighted the landing strip as soon as a plane approached the east end of the runway at a distance of 2 or 3 km. Its light was extinguished after the landing. A wooden shed was erected north of the west end of the runway. It was occupied by soldiers. Night flying was discontinued about 2 a.m.

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28 June. At noon, a Yak-11 made a local flight. In twilight at 6 p.m., three Yak-11s practiced flying. The aircraft had only their position lights on, but the lighting facilities on the ground were not switched on. Between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., there was night flying in the same manner as on 27 June, but no MiG-15s were involved. *

29 June. Between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., two MiG-15s made local flights in cloudless weather. At 8 p.m., three Yak-11s were again observed flying. From 10 p.m., night flying was practiced as on 27 June. Air activity still continued at midnight.

30 June. Between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., individual take-offs were made by MiG-15s. At 8:30 p.m., two MiG-15s landed at the field coming from the east. Between 8:30 p.m. and 1 a.m., night flying was practiced by Yak-11s.*

1 July. Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., there was flying by individual MiG-15s or type-29s. One type-29 [redacted] zoomed to an altitude of about 4,000 meters, flew over the field from west to east, throttled down its engine, shipped to the left driving at an angle of about 70 degrees toward a target on the east edge of the landing field. At an altitude of 500 meters, the plane pulled out of dive, zoomed and repeated the same dive. The plane repeated this maneuver 10 to 15 times before it landed. Then it took off another time and practiced diving in the same manner. Between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m., three Yak-11s practiced night flying. *

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2 July. Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., five individual take-offs were made by MiG-15s in good weather. At 11 a.m., two MiG-15s took off from the field. Their landings were not observed. A Yak-11 practiced flying between 8 a.m. and midnight. *

2. Five low brick buildings were being erected in about the middle of the northern edge of the landing field. On 1 July, [redacted] a rod antenna on top of one brick building and another antenna rod about 8 meters high and braced by three guy wires on another brick building. On 27 June, [redacted] the PKV-45 DF station was removed and replaced by a low frequency landing beacon. The radio truck previously observed near the DF station was also removed. About 3 meters north of the low frequency landing beacon there was a three-axle radio truck of American model and without a number. The vehicle had a door and two windows at its right side and two windows at its left and rear sides.

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3. On 1 July, only 15 tents were counted at the field. Revetments were observed in the AA gun emplacement at the east edge of the field. Barrels, probably of 37-mm guns, were observed behind four revetments. Revetments but no guns were observed in the two other AA emplacements in the southeastern corner and on the southern edge of the field.

4. The red spotlights in the eastern extension of the runway were fitted on wooden poles about 2.5 meters high. The four spotlights at the west end of the runway were fitted low above the ground. They radiated their lights upward at an angle of about 30 degrees.***

5. After 27 June, the spur track could no longer be used because of construction work outside the field. Therefore, no railroad tank cars could be shunted to the field.

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7. Between 27 June and 8 July, there was intensive day and night flying at the field. The soldiers observed at the field wore black-bordered blue, black-bordered black, and red-bordered black epaulets. About 30 MiG-15s were observed at the field.

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* Comment. It was observed that the other fighter regiments of the Twenty-Fourth Air Army which were newly organized in the fall of 1951 made the first night flights as early as May 1952. From the present report it appears that the regiment in Merseburg reached the status of the other regiments only in late June 1952. This can be explained by the fact that the regiment in Merseburg started training some weeks later than the other newly organized regiments of the divisions in Finow and Grossenhain. From the observation that, after 28 June, night flying was no longer practiced by MiG-15s but by Yak-11s it is assumed that the crews of the MiG-15s have not yet progressed in training to such a degree to perform smooth night flights.

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** Comment. The assumption that only some crews were suitable for night flying while the other crews are still in the primary stage of training appears credible. These data indicate that training on regimental level will not be completed before the late fall of 1952.

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*** Comment. The same lighting facilities on the ground were observed at other airfields. The erection of these installations indicates that night flying is scheduled to be performed regularly in the future.

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